

Assemblymember Christine Kehoe

Brings You News

February 14, 2003



Assemblymember Christine Kehoe, Speaker Pro Tem

Water Conservation is a Statewide Concern

Aggressive water conservation has been important to San Diego County, which used the same amount of water in 2001 as it did in 1990 even though the population grew by fifteen percent. Historically, Californians become more aware of water usage and decrease their use through the use of water meters. Many California communities installed water meters as long ago as the early 20th century. Currently, households in San Diego use less than half the amount of water used by households in California cities without water meters. However, water conservation must be a statewide concern.

I recently introduced a bill to require the use of water meters for all residences and non-agricultural businesses.

"California law already requires the installation of water meters for most new residences, but it does not require that these meters be read," said Jim Metropulos, of the Sierra Club California. "This bill would take the next logical step and require all residences in California to, not only have meters, but also allow for water to be priced based on usage." Because San Diego is already using water meters, we are poised to lead the rest of the state in water conservation.

To read the text of AB 306 go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and search by author or bill number.

Legislation Spares Poison Control Centers from Budget Chopping Block

With the state of California facing on unprecedented budget crisis, I have introduced legislation that would identify a new funding source for California's poison control centers thereby protecting the centers from the State's current fiscal crisis.

California's poison control centers, including a center at UC San Diego, serve more than 300,000 Californians annually and save more than \$55 million in health care costs. These facilities need an ongoing and reliable funding source. The centers save \$7 for every \$1 in costs. AB 372 proposes to fund the centers through a fee paid by HMOs and health insurance companies. A fee of about 37 cents per covered Californian.

These companies save tens of millions of dollars every year because more than 170,000 insured Californians call the centers every year for assistance instead of going to the hospital emergency room for help. In most cases, when a parent calls the poison control center with a situation of a child being exposed to some potential poison, the poison control center is able to provide critical information over the phone to resolve the problem. If the centers close, these situations will result in very costly and timely trips to the emergency room or trauma center.

These centers save lives and save money. Keeping them open and operational is the right thing to do. To read the text of AB 306 go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and search by author or bill number.

Tracking Legislation

If you're interested in keeping track of specific legislation, there's an easy way to use the Assembly's website to create a personal "Subscription List" and automatically receive free e-mail updates on bill changes. Begin by going to www.assembly.ca.gov/. From there:

- Click **Legislation** button in left navigation
 - Type in bill author, number or subject; click **Search** (if multiple bills appear, select appropriate bill by clicking on bill number)
 - When bill information is displayed, click **Subscribe** at bottom of page
- Enter your email address, click **OK**.

Job Corps Students learn about politics

Earlier this month, two trainees from the San Diego Job Corps Center spent part of the day in my San Diego office for their "Job Shadow Day" – giving them hands-on experience of how a legislative office functions. The students who participated in the job shadow day learned how the various layers of government work together and how to research the text of pending legislation, as well as more basic functions like faxing and answering the phone.

Exposing young people to a variety of tasks, and showing them the kind of skills they'll need to join the work force, helps them get a realistic picture of what employers look for in potential employees and what a typical day is like in an office. Most important, they quickly learn that staying in school and in job training programs will give them the basics to succeed.

Job Corps, the nation's oldest, largest, and most comprehensive residential, education, and training program for youth, is designed to encourage young people to make positive life choices and develop the skills necessary to reach their goals -- whatever they may be. For more information on the San Diego Job Corps Center, go to <http://www.sandiegojobcorps.org/>.

Keeping your Heart Healthy

Heart disease is still the leading cause of death in the U.S. – unfortunately, you or your family has likely been effected by heart disease in some way. February is "American Heart Month", and this year's theme is "Make A Difference: Join the American Heart Association's Fight Against Heart Disease."

Through its education and research programs and its broad network of dedicated volunteers, the American Heart Association plays a crucial role in bringing about much-needed advances in detecting and treating heart disease. Additionally, the association's efforts to educate the public are unparalleled. You can help fight cardiovascular disease by learning CPR, encouraging your family to adopt a healthy lifestyle involving diet and exercise, and getting involved in education and fundraising programs.

For more information on how you can help the American Heart Association go to www.americanheart.org.

Visit my "Mobile Office" in February

On Saturday February 22, I'm setting up a "Mobile Office" in Pacific Beach.

My Mobile Office hours will be 10 a.m. –noon. The office will be set up in front of VONS Market at 1702 Garnet Ave., at the corner of Jewel and Garnet.

This is a great opportunity for you to come by for a chat and let me know about issues that are important to you. A CHP officer will also be on hand from 11:00 a.m. until noon to conduct free safety fingerprinting for children.

For more information, call (619) 294-7600. I hope to see you there!

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